

# The Red Knight Report

1 April 2006

Volume 1, Issue 5

## Rakkasans on Patrol



As the Red Knight Battalion crosses the half way mark of this deployment, the Soldiers of 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, 320<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery are staying tough and continuing to accomplish every task assigned to them.

The Iraqi Security Forces are making huge strides in readiness and have assumed more battle space and responsibility for the security of Tikrit. The partnership role continues to grow and has become a true relationship between U.S. and Iraqi personnel.

Soldier morale continues to stay high and motivation has increased as a result of being able to see the difference the battalion's efforts have made in the area. As this endeavor continues to expand into an oversight role, our Soldiers find themselves serving as trainers and ambassadors to the local forces. Everyday the Red Knights may find themselves on firing ranges with Iraqi Police, teaching techniques to search vehicles, or mentoring Iraqi Army unit leaders. It is a monumental task that requires patience and endurance; the Red Knights have met this challenge and are excelling at every mission.

The partnership extends beyond training and work. Often, the Iraqi Police and Army soldiers will join their American counterparts in the dining facility for a meal. Early on this was somewhat awkward but it has evolved into an enjoyable hour for both U.S. and Iraqi Soldiers.

The mission that your Red Knight is so expertly conducting here is truly helping the Iraqis taste the freedom that we enjoy so much. While it is new and unfamiliar to them, these freedoms are the results of the continued work of the Soldiers of the Red Knight Battalion.



**Hey Did you Know....** The Department of Defense offers you access to Military OneSource, where you can find help to cope with life's little -- and not so little -- issues. You can call at 1-800-342-9647 anytime (24/7) or email at [militaryonesource.com](mailto:militaryonesource.com). Call or email with any question from finance to child care. They are there to help you find an answer.

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## The Red Knight

Hello to all family members and friends of the Red Knight Rakkasans. First I would like to say thanks to all the family members and friends of the battalion who so warmly welcomed my family during their recent spring break visit to Fort Campbell. Diann and Lexi felt like they never left home during their short stay, and had a great time meeting the family members and friends of the battalion. I feel so fortunate to have great Soldiers, Non Commissioned Officers, Officers and families as part of the Red Knight team and I am humbled by what you and the members of the battalion do on daily basis to take care of each other...so keep up the good work!

I am also excited to announce that our great S6 section has finally gotten the Red Knight DOIM web page up and running. Now I should say upfront that it's still in its infancy, and that currently the only thing we have added is about 10 photos...but it's a start, and between the great people of the Rear Detachment, like SFC Mullins, and the S6 shop here in Iraq, we expect to make improvements daily. So check it out on the Fort Campbell website.

<http://www.campbell.army.mil/newinternet/unitpages/DesertGunner/Default.asp?uid=126>

Well we have been extremely busy since the last report. We have completed four different Air Assaults missions (see picture below, taken from AKO webpage) and continue to assist in training our partnership units. Recently, we had some good luck in finding terrorist and weapons caches that included Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs), artillery shells, mortar shells, TNT, rifles (AK-47s), grenades, and an assortment of other materials used to make and manufacture IEDs. All this work is a team effort with our Iraqi Partners who are taking charge and leading the efforts in our zone of operation.

I am also glad to announce that we continue to have many of our Soldiers, and NCOs reenlist and commit to continue to serve in the Red Knights and the United States Army. Words alone can't describe the feelings and emotions that I have to see great Americans committed to serving selflessly, and to know that you support your spouses in their service to this great country. I am humbled, thankful, and proud of each and everyone in this unit for their sacrifices. THANK YOU! We are also having new members join the team, I would just like to say welcome to the family, and it's great to have outstanding Officers, NCOs, and Soldiers join the Red Knights.

Again, as always, rest assured that I continue to pledge all my efforts to accomplishing the mission and returning home to Fort Campbell with everybody safely. I hope this report finds everyone in good spirits and health – remember wellness encompasses mental, physical and spiritual fitness, and everyone needs some work on their fitness, see what you can do to raise yours and your family's fitness.

We are very proud of the Red Knights and the family members, and Friends of the Battalion - Keep up the great work and attitudes!

The Red Knight – LTC Rich Root



For all the latest information about Fort Campbell and the surrounding area be sure to check out <http://www.fortcampbellmwr.com>. This site contains information about helpful Army programs for service members and their families. It also provides information about Child Youth Services, sports and recreation, and other facilities located on post.

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## Lightning Strikes!



I'd like to take the opportunity at the half-way mark of the deployment to recognize our Soldiers who have been rewarded for their outstanding performance and potential to do bigger and better things. Promotions in the Army serve to recognize the potential that the Chain of Command sees in a Soldier, NCO, or Officer's ability to take on greater responsibilities. The following Soldiers have been promoted to the listed rank since we have been deployed: 1LT Cepeda, 1LT Breden, SSG Mealor, SGT Bozel, SGT Corn, SPC Howell, SPC Lassiter, SPC Haywood, PFC Dunn, PV2 Crayton, PV2 Howell, PV2 Porter, and PV2 Zuniga. Congratulations to all these deserving Soldiers and their families. You certainly have something to be proud of. The Soldiers of HHB continue to

be outstanding performers in difficult and trying situations. Our Soldiers supported Operation Swarmer and several other highly successful Operations that continue to rid Iraq of insurgents and pave the way for U.S. Soldiers to return home. As is always the case when I write these brief articles your Soldiers continue to adapt and learn new skills, always support the team, and help wherever they can. We have crested the hill and are on the downside of the deployment. All of the Soldiers have set their sights on the horizon and are working hard to reach the finish line when we all come home safely. God Bless you all.

## Guardians



Hello Again! It has been an exciting month for Guardian as we continue with our mission of responsive logistics to task force Red Knight. The Soldiers of this amazing Company continue to meet new challenges in addition to the ongoing and unrelenting daily tasks they continue to underwrite the combat effectiveness of the battalion.

Over the past several months the NCOs and Soldiers of the maintenance platoon have taken the lead on instituting and implementing a maintenance training program with the Iraqi Army battalion within the Red Knight area of operations. Several days a week NCOs and Soldiers within the maintenance platoon partner-up with their Iraqi counterparts to mentor and teach critical maintenance techniques

and procedures. This partnership will become the basis for our Iraqi Army maintenance.

I would also like to thank all the wonderful people who supported the company by donating all the DVDs to the company. We look forward to receiving them and getting them out to all the Guardians to enjoy. The continued support over the past several months has been truly wonderful.

Over the past month it has been my distinct pleasure to promote SPC Alspach and SPC McCrae to the rank of SGT. These two outstanding Soldiers will most definitely make a great addition to the NCO Corps; my sincere congratulations to their families. I would also like to congratulate the families of SPC Duran, Land, and Queen on their decisions to stay Army. Over the past month these Soldiers decided to re-enlist and continue to serve their country.

Until next month please continue to keep the Guardians in your thoughts and prayers.



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## Alpha "Gators"



Greetings to all members of the Gator Battery Family.

Everyday the men of Gator Battery make history in Iraq as they prepare the Iraqi Army for the future. It seems like each month our soldiers accomplish something new. Something that has never been accomplished before. This past month has been filled with these accomplishments.

While our soldiers continue to be successful in clearing the roads of IEDs, they have also worked very hard to assist members of the Iraqi Army. As we move closer and closer to coming home, our Gators have prepared the Iraqi Army to take more responsibility when conducting patrols. They work

with them daily on the same set of skills that we trained on prior to deploying to Iraq. The ultimate goal is an Iraqi Army that can perform the same missions as we can, without our assistance. It is this goal that has become our mission.

We can also feel the beginnings of summer here. We look forward to this with both anticipation and dread. Anticipation because we are that much closer to coming home, and dread because the heat will be almost unbearable. But with the approach of summer, our soldiers have also found more time for recreation. Daily basketball games and even soccer games with the IA have found their way into our schedule.

In closing, the men of Gator Battery would like to extend their congratulations to all those who re-enlisted in the last month and for those who were promoted. We are extremely proud of those who wish to continue to serve and those who move up through our ranks. As always, I would like to thank you for all your support and may God bless you, the men and families of Gator Battery, and our great Nation.

Your Battery FRG Leaders and POCs have been working tirelessly to keep the members of their FRGs informed and directing family members to the right agencies to help with an issue. These volunteers all deserve a big thank you for all that they do.

If you have not been contacted by the FRG please call or email your FRG Leader and they will make sure that you get plugged in. If you are not sure which Battery your Soldier is in please call or email the Rear Detachment. They will direct you to the right Battery FRG Leader.

The Rear Detachment Commander is CPT Mike Bilardi and Rear Detachment 1SG is SFC Jared Mullins. They are located in Room 111A in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade Headquarters Building on A Shau Valley Road. Their phone numbers and emails are listed on page 6

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## The Bandits



Hello to all of the families and friends of Bandit Battery. I'd like to start this month's newsletter by publicly thanking the family readiness group (FRG) for sending "6 month bags" to every Soldier in the battery. These bags contained candy and snacks, and were accompanied by a poster, that was filled with words of encouragement. We are so fortunate to have such great ladies who selflessly volunteer to

help out the FRG. We have passed the six month mark of the deployment – so the light is now visible at the end of the tunnel. The Battalion is currently developing a website that will be continually updated with news and pictures from each battery. As soon as it is up and ready, I will disseminate the information through FRG and Soldiers channels.

March has been a very busy month for the Soldiers here. We continue to work hard training the Iraqi Army – and we're beginning to see a lot of improvement (especially at the squad and platoon level). In a couple weeks, the Iraqi Army company we are partnered with will assume control of their own area of operations. We will steadily shift our focus from directly fighting the insurgents, to reinforcing Iraqi Soldiers as they fight them. The sooner the Iraqi Army and police are able to independently secure this area, the sooner coalition forces will be able to depart. From Private to Captain, everyone in the battery is getting a chance to help make a better Iraqi Army.

This past week, 13-19 March, was very successful for the battery. The Soldiers of Bandit Battery discovered several very large weapons caches, which included: artillery and mortar rounds, a sniper rifle, grenades, and IED making material. We were also able to arrest several weapons dealers. Despite six months of daily combat patrols, the Soldiers remain disciplined, alert, and ready. Your Soldiers are professional and dedicated men; and give 100% every day.

I'm happy to announce the promotion of two individuals in the battery, and the re-enlistment of several others. CPL Arthur was promoted to Sergeant, and PFC Larew was promoted to Specialist. Congratulations to both of these Bandits – they set the standard! SSG Fofana, SGT Dillard, and SPC Raver all re-enlisted – thank you all for your commitment to our Army and Nation. We received two new Soldiers this month: PFC Leterski, and SPC Lopez – Welcome to the Bandit family.

Thank you again for your continued letters, care packages, thoughts, and prayers. We all appreciate it very much. The amazing support and generosity we've received from back home has allowed us to focus on our mission. Everyone here knows there's someone in America thinking of them and praying for them... and that brings comfort to us all. God Bless you and your families. Bandits Lead the Way!

**Red Cross Messages:** Please use the example shown below as the address for the soldier you want the Red Cross Message to go to. Do not use their mailing address in Iraq. Also, please call the Rear Detachment so that they are tracking that a Red Cross Message has been sent.

*Insert your Soldier's Battery, 3-320 FA BN*

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## Rear Detachment/ FRG Phone Numbers and Email Addresses

Rear D. Commander: CPT Mike Bilardi [michael.lefler@us.army.mil](mailto:michael.lefler@us.army.mil)  
Rear D. 1SG: SFC Jared Mullins [jared.mullins@us.army.mil](mailto:jared.mullins@us.army.mil)

Rear Detachment Phone Number During Duty Hours: 0930-1700(central time) Mon-Fri: **(270) 798-0572**  
Rear Detachment Emergency After Duty Hours Phone Number: **(931) 980-9178**

Battalion FRG Leader:	Kate Sullivan	(931) 431-4271	<a href="mailto:katetimothy@aol.com">katetimothy@aol.com</a>
HNB Battery FRG Leader:	Tresha McGowan	(931) 648-4372	<a href="mailto:mptresha@earthlink.net">mptresha@earthlink.net</a>
Alpha Battery FRG Leader :	Maggy Gray	(931) 431-5246	<a href="mailto:maggytruett@hotmail.com">maggytruett@hotmail.com</a>
Bravo Battery FRG Leader:	Crystal Montgomery	(931)906-8692	<a href="mailto:cmontgomery1697@bellsouth.net">cmontgomery1697@bellsouth.net</a>
Golf Battery FRG Leader:	Tunissha Marshall	(931) 647-7048	<a href="mailto:tunissha.hubbard@us.army.mil">tunissha.hubbard@us.army.mil</a>



## The Chaplain's Corner

Greetings from Iraq. We now come to the months of March and April, we are in the final days of Lent (the Great Fast) and look forward to Easter. The Red Knights have been extremely busy both operationally and spiritually. We have seen God do wonderful things here on the FOB over the past few months. As I talk with soldiers there is a common theme I find, they both love and miss their families. Many soldiers have told me that they are proud of the work they are doing here, and hope that their families are as well.

Things are going very well; we are staying busy and working hard. Each day we see more improvement in the area and the Iraqi people doing more to care for themselves. We are beginning to see the fruits of all of our hard work. I ask that you keep the battalion in your prayers, and to know that we pray for you everyday. Thank you for all of your support. Have a happy and blessed Easter and Passover.

sol Deo gloria  
CH Jason McCash